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ABSTRACT

This study uses preliminary data to compare college student-athlete graduation rates before and after the passage of National Collegiate Athletic Association Proposition 48, which took effect in 1986 to reform perceived abuses in college revenue sports. The data came from entering freshmen in 1984, 1985, and 1986. The population centered only on student-athletes for whom data have been reported for their entire career at an institution, who received athletically related aid in their first year, who were reported as being either black or white, and who were reported to be U.S. citizens. The total number in the 1984-85 combined sample was 3,383 and the total in the 1986 sample was 2,435. The results show that graduation rates increased from the 1984-85 cohort to the 1986 cohort. However, those increases were not uniform across all groups. Though the reform effort was designed to prevent abuses against students in revenue sports, the students most positively affected in terms of graduation rates were female student-athletes and male student athletes in nonrevenue sports. Revenue-sport athletes stayed the same or dropped slightly in graduation rates. Students in groups identified as partial qualifiers (less academically qualified for college) showed graduation rate increases in the current system. The data are presented in six tables and seven figures. (JB)

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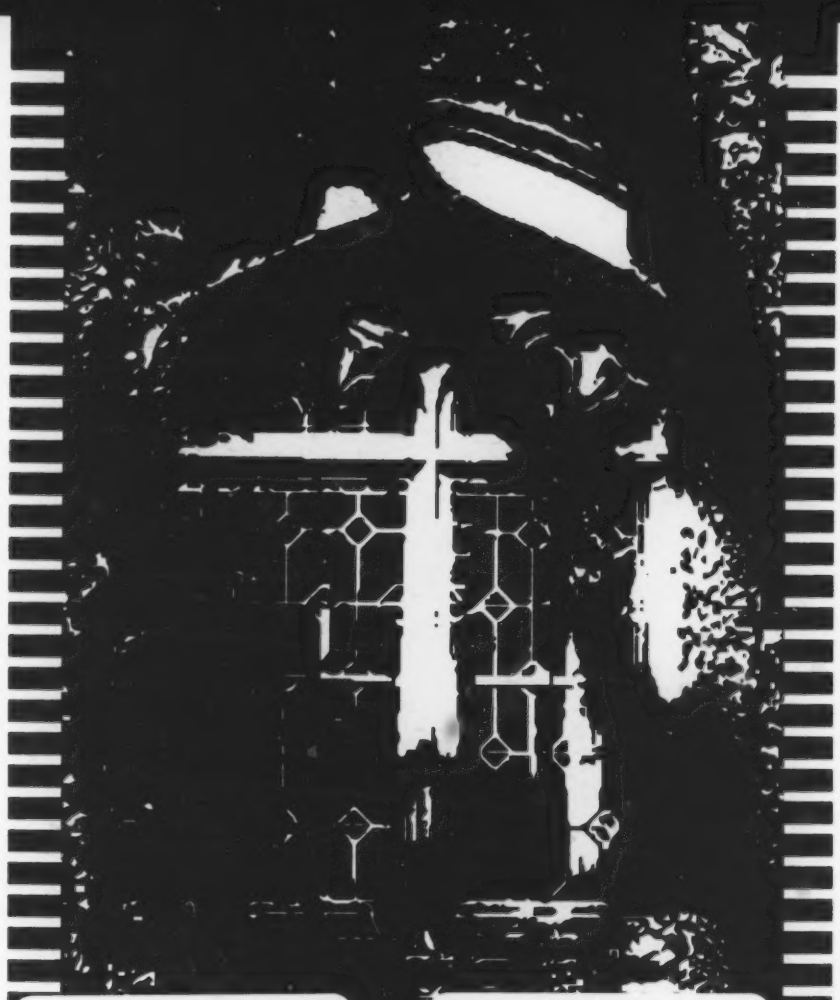

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NCAA Research Report

Report 92-01

A Comparison of College Graduation Rates of Freshman Student-Athletes Before and After Proposition 48

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FOREWORD

This report is the seventh in a series that we shall be publishing to inform our member institutions and others about our study of student-athletes' academic performance under Bylaw 14.3.

The results presented here are preliminary. This study was begun in 1985 and still has several years before completion.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this report.

RICHARD D. SCHULTZ
NCAA Executive Director
August 1993

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a comparison of student-athlete academic data collected before and after NCAA Bylaw 14.3 (commonly referred to as "Proposition 48") went into effect in 1986. Two groups will be compared — a group of student-athletes who entered Division I institutions in either 1984 or 1985, and a group who entered Division I institutions in 1986. Presented first are graduation-rate data for both groups. This is the first time that five-year graduation rates have been presented for student-athletes who entered NCAA institutions under the more restrictive Proposition 48 guidelines.

Our purpose is to describe differences between the two aforementioned samples. All data will be presented in a descriptive manner. We will simply identify significant areas in which we have seen differences between the two groups. In future reports, we will analyze the potential reasons for these differences. (See NCAA Research Report 92-02.)

As you survey these data, remember that these are preliminary results. This is the first set of post-Proposition 48 data, and when the data from the entering classes of 1987 and 1988 are analyzed, there should be a much clearer picture of the effects of that legislation. The current data will serve as a progress report, and will help to identify areas for further study.

METHODS

The general methodology is contained in NCAA Research Report 90-01. The data for this report come from entering freshman classes of 1984, 1985, and 1986. The 1984 and 1985 data have been combined for purposes of these analyses; both of those classes entered before Proposition 48 and are seen as comparable cohorts within this study. The student-athletes included are those for whom data have been reported for their entire career at an institution, whether that career was one or five years long. Also, we have included only student-athletes who received athletically related aid in their first year at an institution, only those student-athletes who were reported as being either black or white, and only those who were reported to be U.S. citizens. The total number of student-athletes included in the 1984-1985 sample is 3,383. The total number in the 1986 sample is 2,435.

The graduation rates for the following tables were calculated by dividing the number of graduates after five years by the number of student-athletes who had entered that institution as freshmen in the initial year of the study. The overall rate is not adjusted for transfers or other groups. When differences between rates are presented in this report, standard errors have

been calculated around those means to ensure that reported differences are significant. For simplicity, those error measures are not reported within this analysis. However, any rate differences highlighted are found to be different within 95 percent confidence boundaries.

When student-athletes are divided into partial and full qualifiers, it is done on the same basis for both cohorts. That is, student-athletes who attained at least an ACT score of 15 or an SAT score of 700, and at least a 2.0 grade-point average in the 11 core courses required for admission were declared qualifiers. All others were declared partial qualifiers.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides an overall comparison of graduation rates among several groups of student-athletes in the 1984-1985 and 1986 cohorts. The first line of this table shows that the overall graduation rate went from 48.2 percent in the 1984-85 cohort, to 56.5 percent in the 1986 cohort.

Similarly, when looking at the racial breakdown, one can see that both Blacks and Whites show higher graduation rates after Proposition 48 went into effect. It is important to note, though, that the percentage of Blacks in the overall group dropped from 25.2 percent in the 1984-1985 cohort to 17.9 percent in the 1986 cohort.

The finding that graduation rates are higher in 1986 than in 1984-1985 is consistent throughout the different breakdowns in this table. This is especially true for female student-athletes, whose rate increased by 12.7 percent between the two cohorts. The only grouping in this table that showed a decrease in its graduation rate was the white-male revenue-sport group.

Overall, Table 1 indicates a positive effect on the graduation rates of college student-athletes in the 1986 cohorts. Subsequent tables will take a closer look at this effect, and of the groups of student-athletes who seemed to change most significantly after 1986. These tables will be broken down between student-athletes labeled as partial qualifiers and those who were full qualifiers in an attempt to see the differences between these two important groups.

Table 2 provides data relating to the success of the overall groups of partial and full qualifiers, and then gives the overall rates separately for each racial group. In the general group, the partial qualifiers and the full qualifiers both show some improvement in graduation rate from the first two cohorts to the third. Within the group of black student-athletes, the partial qualifiers show an increase in graduation rate, but the full qualifiers decreased in 1986. Among the Whites, all groups showed a slight increase in 1986.

Table 3 provides the same information for all male student-athletes. Overall, the male student-athletes resemble the majority of the findings related thus far. That is, the 1986 cohort shows a better graduation rate than that of the earlier cohorts. However, when the black males are analyzed sepa-

rately, one can see that the rate for black male full qualifiers actually decreased by more than 10 percent in the 1986 cohort. Overall, both Blacks and Whites showed an increase in the 1986 group.

Table 4 further refines the group being analyzed to just those males who took part in revenue sports (men's basketball and football). As has been the case in previous tables, the partial qualifiers in this group show an overall increase in graduation rates. However, the full qualifiers show a decrease in graduation rates among those who entered the institutions after Proposition 48 went into effect. This is especially true within the population of black full qualifiers. This is an interesting effect, and one that will receive further attention in more detailed analyses.

Tables 5 and 6 provide similar data for male nonrevenue-sport participants, and females, respectively. These tables show that the graduation-rate increases seen in the overall population are due mostly to people in these two groups. The male nonrevenue-sport participants show an increase of more than 10 percent after Proposition 48 went into effect, and the females show an increase of more than 15 percent. Clearly, the female sports participants and the male nonrevenue-sports participants are driving the increases in graduation rate that are evident in the 1986 cohort.

Figures 1 through 7 provide illustrations of the data that have been discussed above.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that graduation rates increased between 1984-1985 and 1986. However, those increases were not uniform across all groups and seem to have appeared in interesting places. While the Proposition 48 legislation was spurred by perceived abuses in the revenue sports, the people who seemed to be positively affected (at least in terms of graduation rates) are the female student-athletes, and male student-athletes in nonrevenue sports. Revenue-sport groups stay the same or drop slightly in terms of graduation rates. In the groups that would have been partial qualifiers in the current system, there are observed graduation-rate increases in the year after the stricter legislation went into effect. (There are also far fewer people in the "partial qualifier" category in the 1986 cohort than there were in the 1984-1985 cohorts.) The sources of these changes will be studied in more detail in further analyses.

It is important to remember that these data are preliminary, and that further research is being conducted. We have some preliminary evidence that suggests that the 1987 and 1988 cohorts are slightly different from 1986, and that these cohorts will add significantly to our understanding of the differences in academic performance of student-athletes before and after Proposition 48 went into effect. It may also help us to gain insight into the effects that legislation passed at the 1992 NCAA Convention might have.

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TABLE 1

FIVE-YEAR GRADUATION RATES FOR 1984-85 AND 1986 STUDENT-ATHLETES BY GROUP

Group	Total Persons				Overall Graduation Rate	
	1984-85		1986		1984-85	1986
	N	%	N	%	(N=3,383)	(N=2,435)
OVERALL	3,383	100.0%	2,435	100.0%	48.2%	56.5%
RACIAL GROUP						
Whites	2,532	74.8%	1,999	82.1%	54.4%	60.2%
Blacks	851	25.2%	436	17.9%	29.5%	39.5%
SEX						
Males	2,401	71.0%	1,649	67.7%	44.8%	50.6%
Females	982	29.0%	786	32.3%	56.3%	69.0%
SEPARATE SPORTS						
Male Revenue	1,356	40.1%	837	34.4%	44.5%	45.9%
Male Nonrevenue	1,045	30.9%	812	33.3%	45.3%	55.4%
Female All	982	29.0%	786	32.3%	56.3%	69.0%
SEPARATE SPORTS						
White Male Revenue	783	23.1%	538	22.1%	56.2%	52.8%
White Male Other	919	27.2%	755	31.0%	47.8%	56.8%
White Female All	830	24.5%	706	29.0%	60.1%	69.6%
Black Male Revenue	573	16.9%	299	12.3%	28.5%	33.4%
Black Male Other	126	3.7%	57	2.3%	27.0%	36.8%
Black Female All	152	4.5%	80	3.3%	35.5%	63.8%

Note: All percentages based on sample size listed.

TABLE 2

COHORT COMPARISONS OF PARTIAL AND FULL QUALIFIERS

	Partial Qualifiers	Full Qualifiers	Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	23.0%	58.6%	48.2%
(Number of Students)	(990)	(2393)	(3383)
1986 Graduation Rate	30.3%	60.6%	56.5%
(Number of Students)	(330)	(2105)	(2435)

2a–Cohort Comparisons of Black Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Black Partial Qualifiers	Black Full Qualifiers	Black Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	20.1%	50.2%	29.5%
(Number of Students)	(586)	(265)	(851)
1986 Graduation Rate	30.2%	45.3%	39.5%
(Number of Students)	(169)	(267)	(436)

2b–Cohort Comparisons of White Partial and Full Qualifiers

	White Partial Qualifiers	White Full Qualifiers	White Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	27.2%	59.6%	54.4%
(Number of Students)	(404)	(2128)	(2532)
1986 Graduation Rate	30.4%	62.8%	60.2%
(Number of Students)	(161)	(1838)	(1999)

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TABLE 3

COHORT COMPARISONS OF MALE PARTIAL AND FULL QUALIFIERS

	Male Partial Qualifiers	Male Full Qualifiers	Male Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	20.8%	56.6%	44.8%
(Number of Students)	(792)	(1609)	(2401)
1986 Graduation Rate	25.7%	55.3%	50.6%
(Number of Students)	(261)	(1388)	(1649)

3a–Cohort Comparisons of Black Male Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Black Male Partial Qualifiers	Black Male Full Qualifiers	Black Male Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	19.1%	50.0%	28.2%
(Number of Students)	(493)	(206)	(699)
1986 Graduation Rate	26.7%	39.3%	34.0%
(Number of Students)	(150)	(206)	(356)

3b–Cohort Comparisons of White Male Partial and Full Qualifiers

	White Male Partial Qualifiers	White Male Full Qualifiers	White Male Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	23.8%	57.6%	51.7%
(Number of Students)	(299)	(1403)	(1702)
1986 Graduation Rate	24.3%	58.0%	55.1%
(Number of Students)	(111)	(1182)	(1293)

TABLE 4

COHORT COMPARISONS OF REVENUE-SPORT PARTIAL AND FULL QUALIFIERS

	Revenue Partial Qualifiers	Revenue Full Qualifiers	Revenue Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	21.9%	60.6%	44.5%
(Number of Students)	(566)	(790)	(1356)
1986 Graduation Rate	24.9%	52.5%	45.9%
(Number of Students)	(201)	(636)	(837)

4a–Cohort Comparisons of Black Revenue-Sport Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Black Revenue Partial Qualifiers	Black Revenue Full Qualifiers	Black Revenue Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	19.3%	51.5%	28.5%
(Number of Students)	(410)	(163)	(573)
1986 Graduation Rate	26.9%	38.8%	33.4%
(Number of Students)	(134)	(165)	(299)

4b–Cohort Comparisons of White Revenue-Sport Partial and Full Qualifiers

	White Revenue Partial Qualifiers	White Revenue Full Qualifiers	White Revenue Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	28.9%	63.0%	56.2%
(Number of Students)	(156)	(627)	(783)
1986 Graduation Rate	20.9%	57.3%	52.8%
(Number of Students)	(67)	(471)	(538)

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TABLE 5

COHORT COMPARISONS OF MALE NONREVENUE PARTIAL AND FULL QUALIFIERS

	Male Nonrev. Partial Qualifiers	Male Nonrev. Full Qualifiers	Male Nonrev. Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	18.1%	52.8%	45.3%
(Number of Students)	(226)	(819)	(1045)
1986 Graduation Rate	28.3%	57.6%	55.4%
(Number of Students)	(60)	(752)	(812)

5a–Cohort Comparisons of Black Male Nonrevenue Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Partial Qualifiers	Full Qualifiers	Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	18.1%	44.2%	27.0%
(Number of Students)	(83)	(43)	(126)
1986 Graduation Rate	25.0%	41.5%	36.8%
(Number of Students)	(16)	(41)	(57)

5b–Cohort Comparisons of White Male Nonrevenue Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Partial Qualifiers	Full Qualifiers	Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	18.2%	53.2%	47.8%
(Number of Students)	(143)	(776)	(919)
1986 Graduation Rate	29.6%	58.5%	56.8%
(Number of Students)	(44)	(711)	(755)

TABLE 6

COHORT COMPARISONS OF FEMALE PARTIAL AND FULL QUALIFIERS

	Female Partial Qualifiers	Female Full Qualifiers	Female Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	31.8%	62.5%	56.3%
(Number of Students)	(198)	(784)	(982)
1986 Graduation Rate	47.8%	71.0%	69.0%
(Number of Students)	(69)	(717)	(786)

6a–Cohort Comparisons of Black Female Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Partial Qualifiers	Full Qualifiers	Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	25.8%	50.9%	35.5%
(Number of Students)	(93)	(59)	(152)
1986 Graduation Rate	57.9%	65.6%	63.8%
(Number of Students)	(19)	(61)	(80)

6b–Cohort Comparisons of White Female Partial and Full Qualifiers

	Partial Qualifiers	Full Qualifiers	Total
1984-85 Graduation Rate	37.1%	63.5%	60.1%
(Number of Students)	(105)	(725)	(830)
1986 Graduation Rate	44.0%	71.5%	69.6%
(Number of Students)	(50)	(656)	(706)

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FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES
FOR ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES
(OVERALL AND BY RACIAL GROUP)

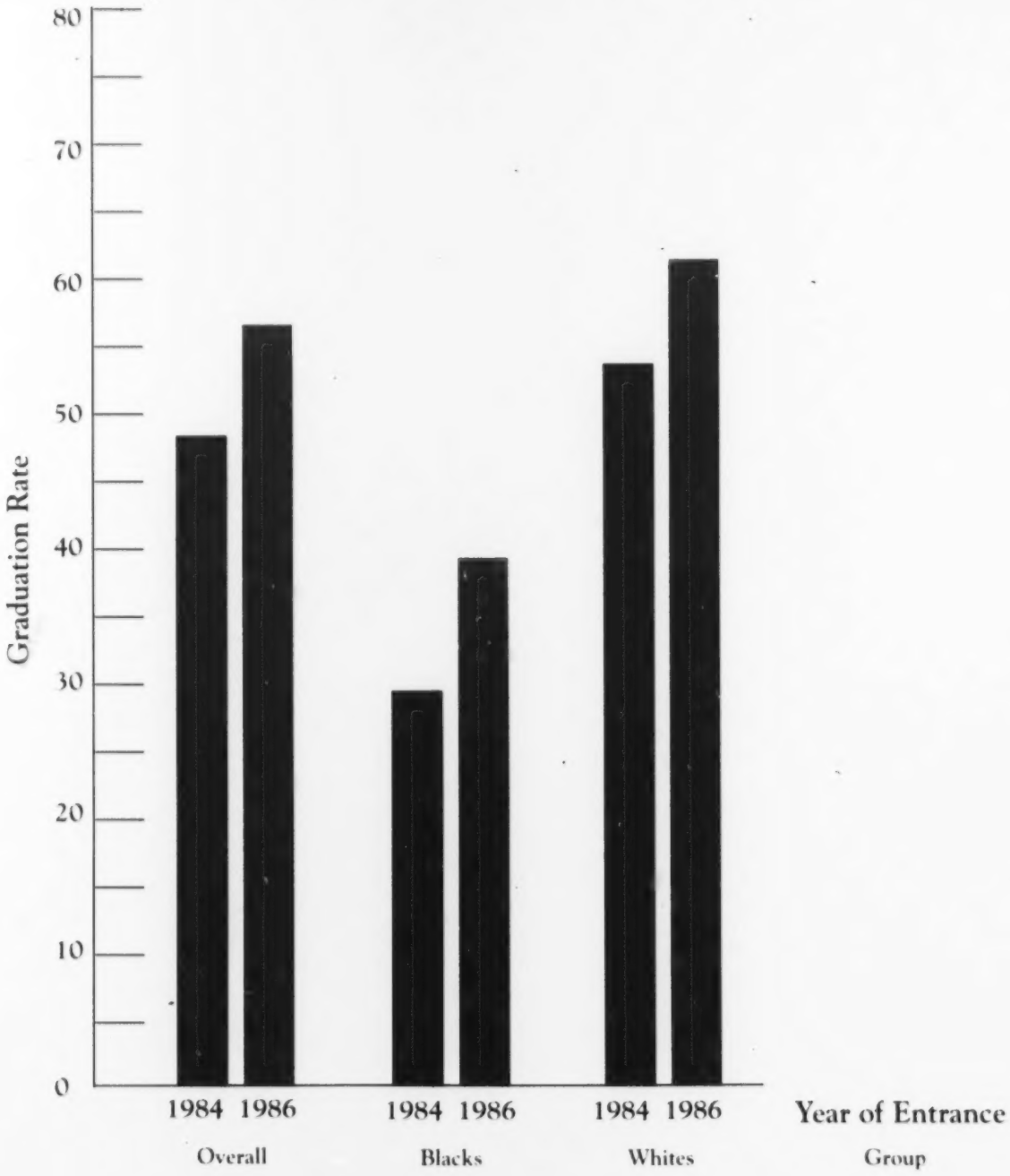
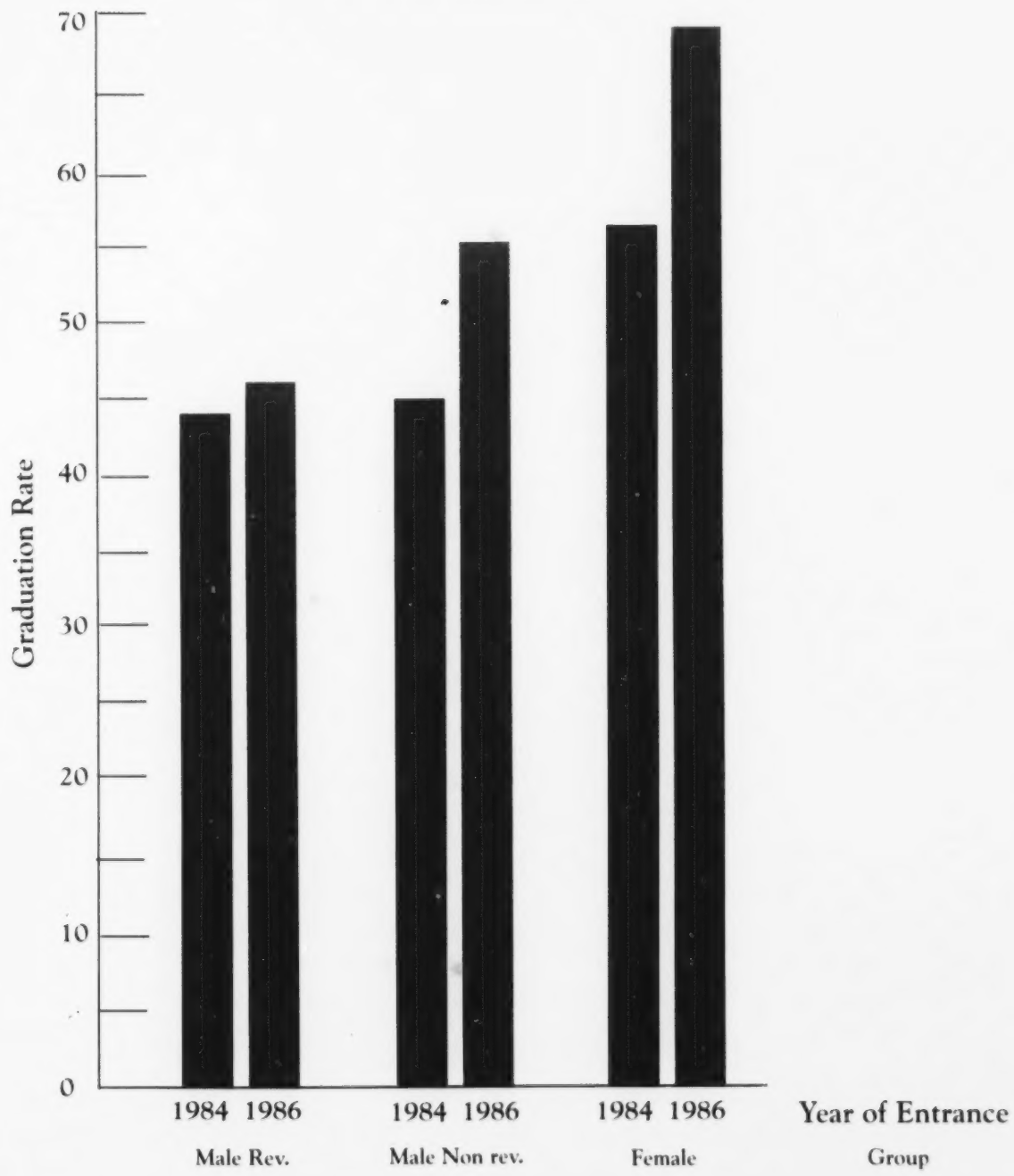


FIGURE 2

COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES (BY REVENUE GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants.)

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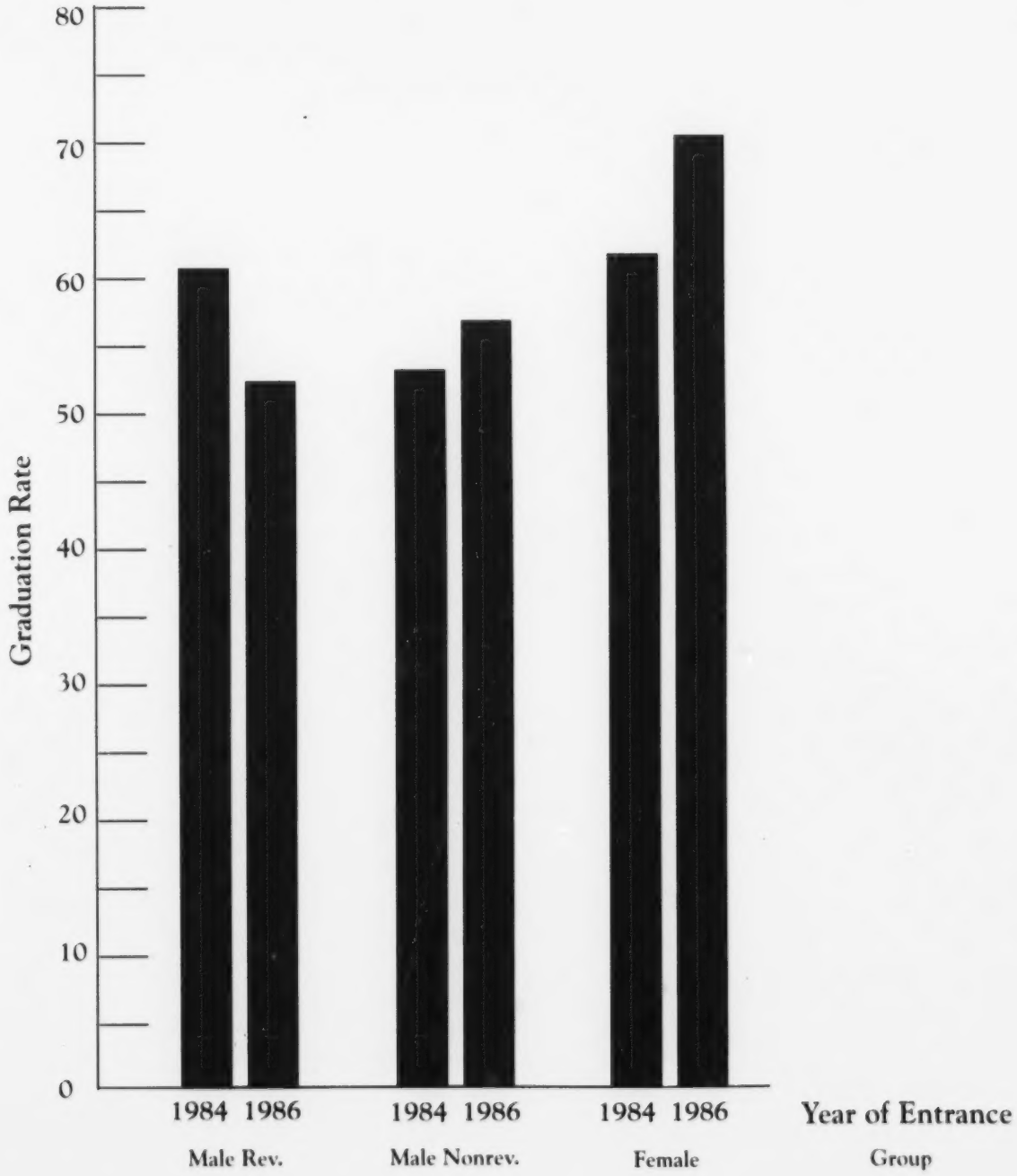
FIGURE 3

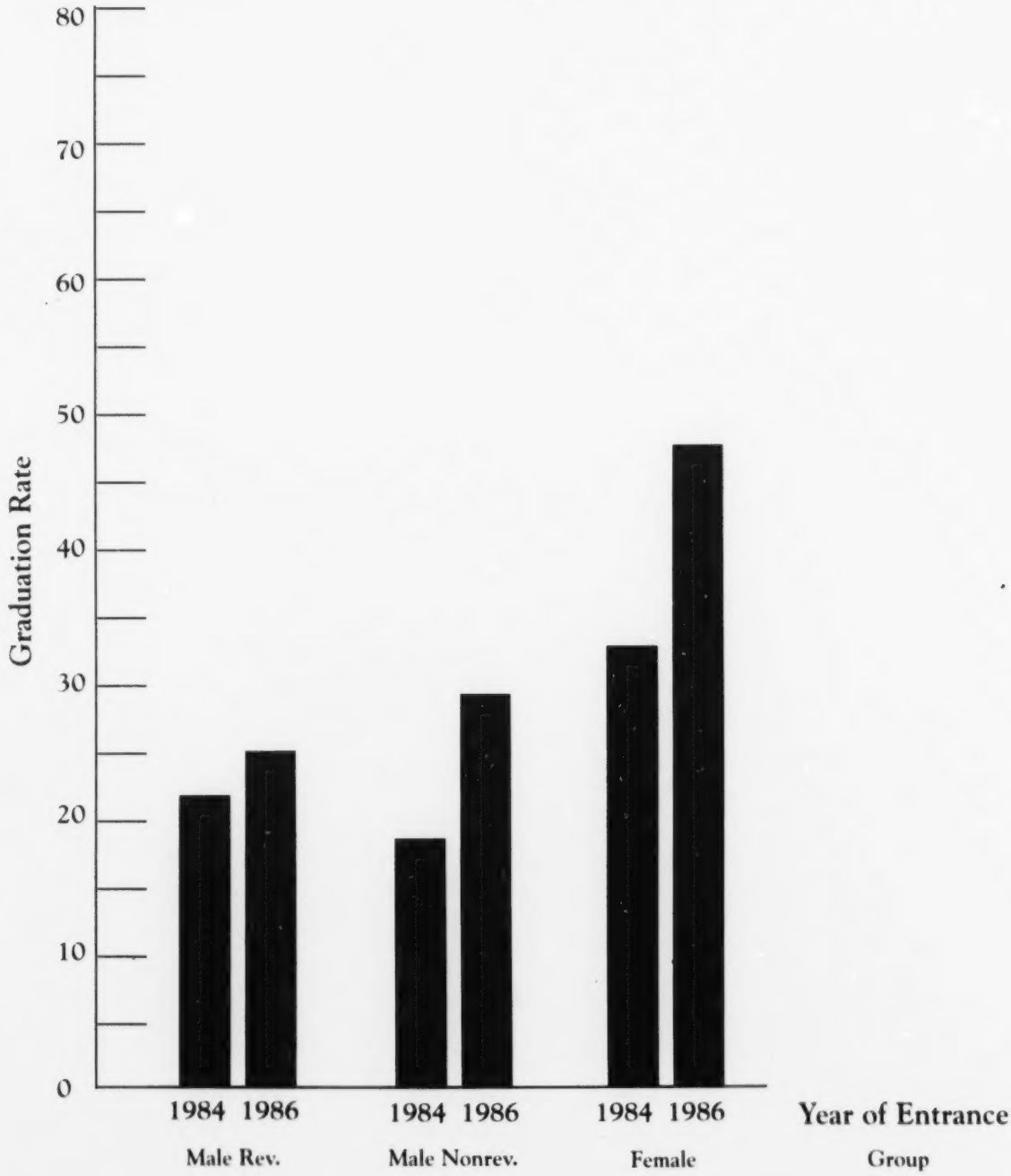
COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR FULL QUALIFIERS UNDER PROPOSITION 48 (BY REVENUE GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants.)

FIGURE 4

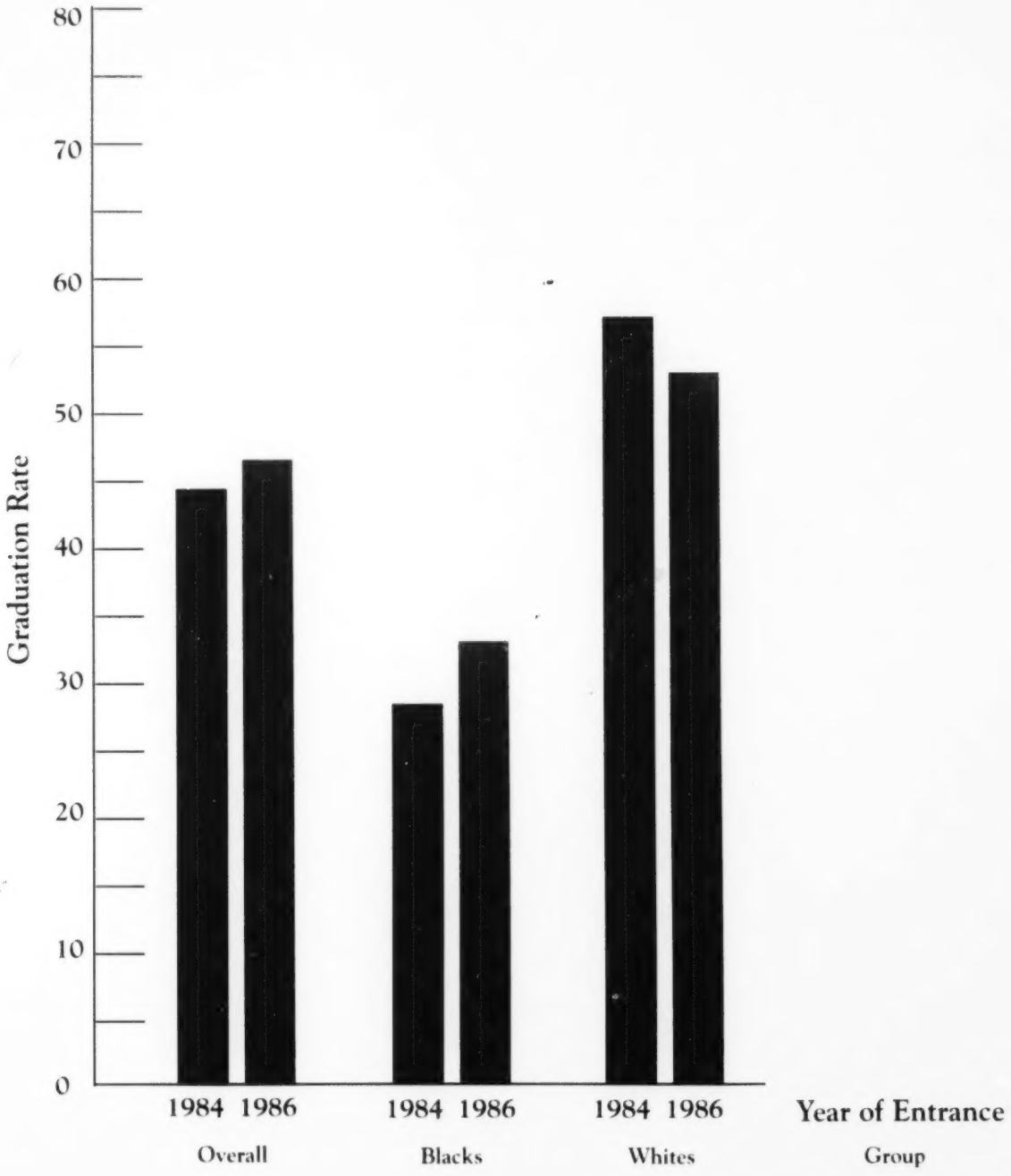
COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR PARTIAL QUALIFIERS UNDER PROPOSITION 48 (BY REVENUE GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants.)

FIGURE 5

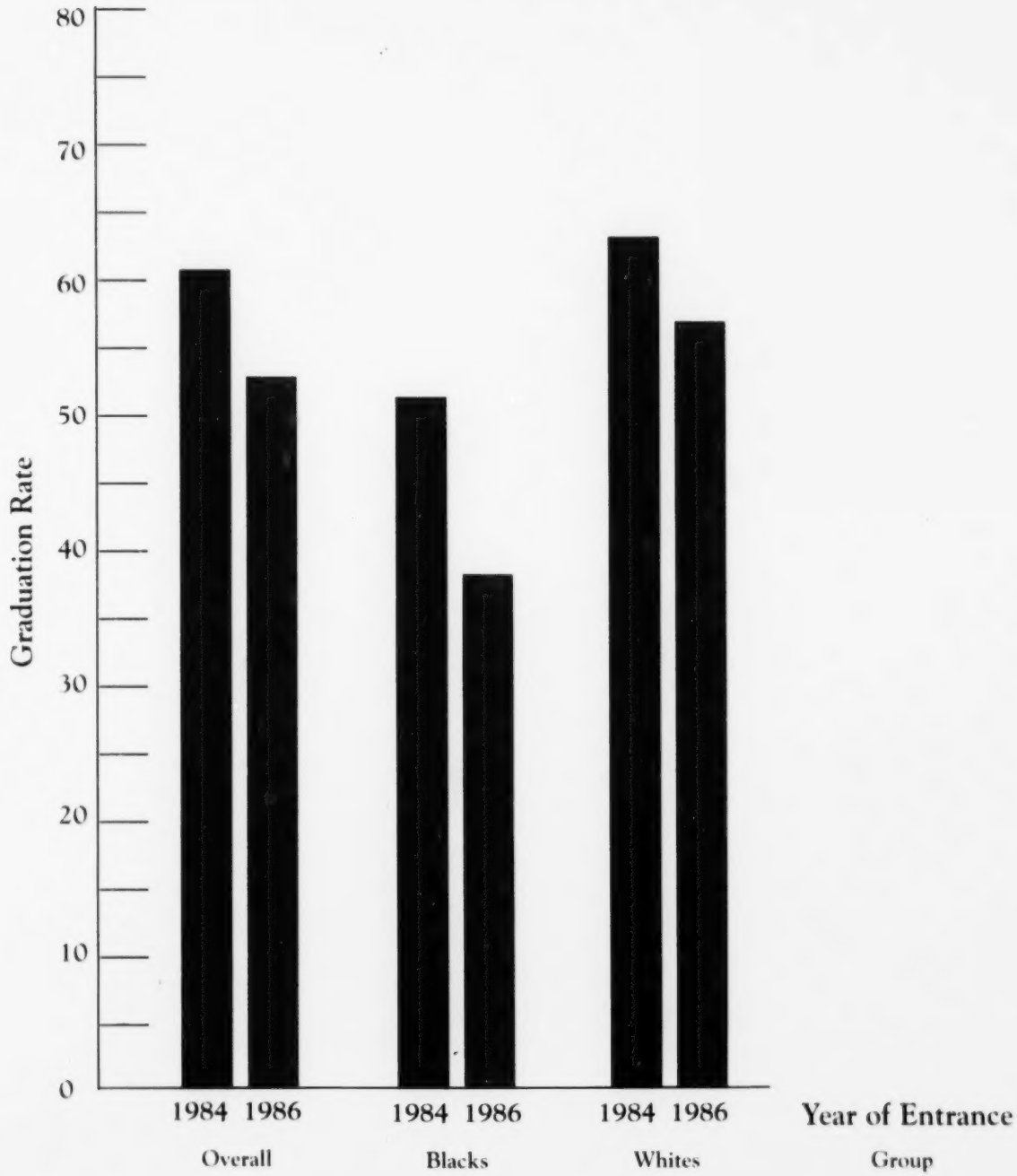
COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR ALL REVENUE-SPORT STUDENT-ATHLETES (OVERALL AND BY RACIAL GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants. Revenue sports are football and men's basketball.)

FIGURE 6

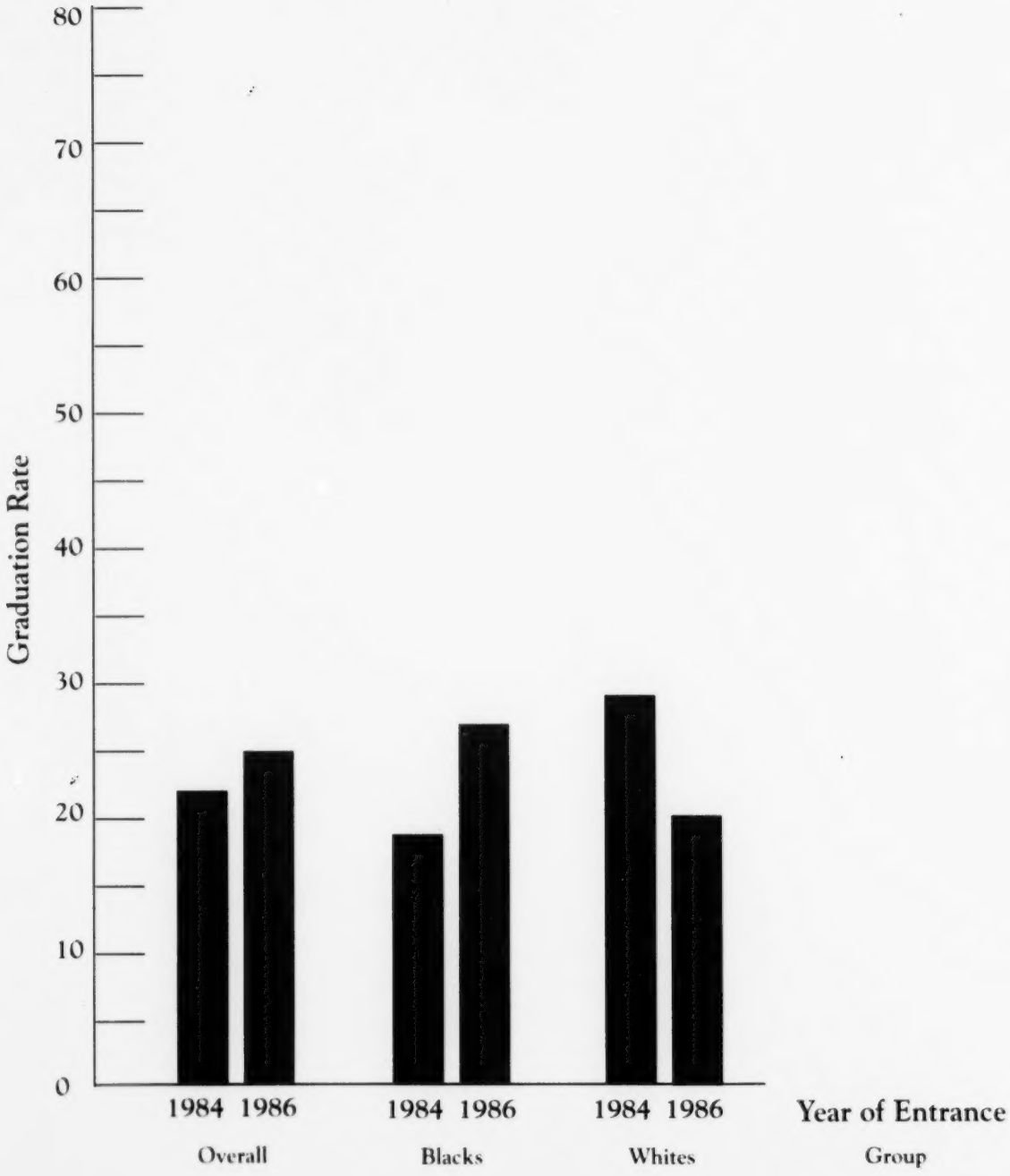
COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR REVENUE-SPORT FULL QUALIFIERS UNDER PROPOSITION 48 (OVERALL AND BY RACIAL GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants. Revenue sports are football and men's basketball.)

FIGURE 7

COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1986 GRADUATION RATES FOR REVENUE-SPORT PARTIAL QUALIFIERS UNDER PROPOSITION 48 (OVERALL AND BY RACIAL GROUP)



(Group labeled 1984 includes 1984 and 1985 entrants. Revenue sports are football and men's basketball.)

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